Supreme Court of the United States.

Nos. 24 and 27.—October Term, 1905.

24	New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company, Appellant, *vs.* The Interstate Commerce Commission.	Appeals from the Circuit Court of the United States for the Western District of Virginia.
27	The Interstate Commerce Commission, Appellant, *vs.* The Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company, and The New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company.	

[February 19, 1906.]

Mr. Justice White delivered the opinion of the Court.

Following an inquiry, begun in consequence of a complaint to it made, the Interstate Commerce Commission, through the Attorney General of the United States, filed under the act to further regulate commerce, (32 Stat. 847,) in the Circuit Court of the United States for the Western District of Virginia, this proceeding against the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company, a Virginia corporation, and the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company, a corporation of the State of Connecticut. In this opinion we shall hereafter respectively speak of the parties as the Commission, the Chesapeake and Ohio, and the New Haven. The petition averred that the Chesapeake and Ohio was engaged in the carriage of coal as interstate traffic between the Kanawha district of West Virginia and Newport News, Virginia, for delivery thence to the New Haven, in Connecticut, and charged that the traffic was being moved at less than the published rates, and in such a way as to produce a discrimination in favor of the New Haven road and against others, all in violation of the act to regulate commerce and the amendments thereto. Specifying the grounds of the complaint, it was alleged that in the spring of ~~1903~~ the Chesapeake and Ohio made a verbal agreement with the New Haven to sell to that road sixty thousand tons of coal, to be carried from the Kanawha district to Newport News, and thence by water to Connecticut, for delivery to the buyer at $2.75 per ton, and that a considerable portion had already been delivered and the remainder was in process of delivery. It was averred that the price of the coal at the mines where the Chesapeake and

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courts, and this upon three distinct grounds: The obligation of every one contracting with a corporation, to take notice of the legal limits of its powers; the interest of the stockholders, not to be subjected to risks which they have never undertaken; and, above all, the interest of the public, that the corporation shall not transcend the powers conferred upon it by law." (*Central Transportation Co.* v. *Pullman Palace Car Co.*, 139 U. S., 24, 48.)

When the statutes of a State creating or licensing a railroad corporation are deemed public and judicially noticed by the courts of that State, the Federal courts sitting therein and the Supreme Court on appeal will also take judicial notice of them. (*Martin's Administrator* v. *Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Co.*, 151 U. S., 673, 678.)

Acts incorporating and licensing railroads are public, and the courts of Virginia and West Virginia take judicial notice of them.

Baltimore, etc., Railroad Co. v. *Sherman*, 30 Gratt. (Va.), 602.

Norfolk, etc., Railroad Co. v. *Harman*, 83 Va., 553.

Hart v. *Baltimore, etc., Railroad Co.*, 6 W. Va., 336.

State v. *Baltimore, etc., Railroad Co.*, 15 W. Va., 362.

Douglass v. *Kanawha, etc., Railroad Co.*, 44 W. Va., 267.

Am. and Eng. Enc. of Law, vol. 17, 942.

The Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company was incorporated by an act of the general assembly of the State of Virginia passed March 1, 1867. (Acts of Virginia Assembly, 1866–1867, c. 280, p. 705.)

(c)

[Insert bottom page 25.]

Section 3, interstate commerce act, declares it unlawful for a carrier to make or give any undue or unreasonable preference or advantage, or to subject any person or traffic to undue or unreasonable prejudice or disadvantage in any respect.

The purchases in the market and deliveries of coal by the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway to the New York, etc., railroad, at a price insufficient to repay purchase money and meet schedule freight rates in pursuance of a gratuitous option under which the latter could demand deliveries according to its interest alone manifestly gave the railroad a preference and advantage. As nobody else could hope to obtain coal on the terms gratuitously granted the railroad, the preference and advantage were undue and unreasonable.

Such purchases and deliveries operated to the undue prejudice and disadvantage of coal operators in West Virginia and traffic furnished by them. So long as the railway would supply a New England consumer with coal at less than market price at mines, plus cost of carriage, nobody had a fair opportunity to utilize that demand for his products. His coal was necessarily limited to other markets unless sold to the railroad at such price as it might agree to.

I submit that the gratuitous option plan resulted in most obnoxious advantages and discriminations, and that such was its purpose when originated.

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If performance of the 1896 agreement required the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway to do anything prohibited by law its duty was not to perform and no liability for damages could have arisen because of the failure.

Gulf, Colorado, &c., Ry. v. *Hefley* (1895), 158 U. S., 98, 102.

Southern Railway Co. v. *Wilcox* (1901), 99 Va., 394, 408, 409.

Fitzgerald & Co. v. *Grand Trunk Railroad Co.*, 63 Vt., 169.

Savannah, F. & W. Ry. Co. v. *Bundick* (Ga.), 21 S. E. Rep., 995.

Southern Railway Co. v. *Harrison* (Ala.) (1898), 43 L. R. A., 385.

Bullard v. *Northern Pacific Railroad Co.*, 10 Mont., 168.

Transactions under the 1896 agreement show that the net results to the carrying company were insufficient to pay freight according to published schedules. And this was true of every shipment except those made during a part of 1899, when net receipts exceeded published rates.

At no time—except a part of 1899—was it possible to buy and pay for the coal and its ocean transportation out of the contract price and have enough left to meet schedule freight charges.

tion of the contract the commodity sold, when the price stipulated in the contract does not pay the cost of purchase, the cost of delivery and the published freight rates?

The previous decisions of this court concerning the interstate commerce act do not afford much aid in determining this question. This is the case, because, although that act was adopted in 1887, and questions concerning the import of the act have been often here, such questions have not generally involved the operation and effect of the act concerning the command that published rates be adhered to, and the prohibitions against discrimination, favoritism or rebates, but have mainly concerned the meaning of the act in other respects, that is involved deciding whether powers asserted as to other subjects were vested by the act in the Interstate Commerce Commission.

There are several leading cases decided by the Commission, which are relied upon by the two railroads, directly relating to the question we have stated, but, as we shall have occasion hereafter to weigh their import, we shall not now pause to analyze and apply them.

It cannot be challenged that the great purpose of the act to regulate commerce, whilst seeking to prevent unjust and unreasonable rates, was to secure equality of rates as to all and to destroy favoritism, these last being accomplished by requiring the publication of tariffs and by prohibiting secret departures from such tariffs, and forbidding rebates, preferences and all other forms of undue discrimination. To this extent and for these purposes the statute was remedial and is, therefore, entitled to receive that interpretation which reasonably accomplishes the great public purpose which it was enacted to subserve. That a carrier engaged in interstate commerce becomes subject as to such commerce to the commands of the statute, and may not set its provisions at naught whatever otherwise may be its power when carrying on commerce not interstate in character, cannot in reason be denied. Now, in view of the positive command of the second section of the act, that no departure from the published rate shall be made, "directly or indirectly," how can it in reason be held that a carrier may take itself from out the statute in every case by simply electing to be a dealer and transport a commodity in that character? For, of course, if a carrier has a right to disregard the published rates by resorting to a particular form of dealing, it must follow that there is no obligation on the part of a carrier to adhere to the rates, because doing so is merely voluntary. The all-embracing prohibition against either directly or indirectly charging less than the published rates shows that the purpose of the statute was to make the prohibition applicable to every method of dealing by a carrier by which the forbidden result could be brought about. If the public purpose which the statute was intended to accomplish be borne in mind, its meaning becomes, if possible, clearer. What was that pur-

pose? It was to compel the carrier as a public agent to give equal treatment to all. Now if by the mere fact of purchasing and selling merchandise to be transported, a carrier is endowed with the power of disregarding the published rate, it becomes apparent that the carrier possesses the right to treat the owners of like commodities by entirely different rules. That is to say, the existence of such a, power in its essence would enable a carrier, if it chose to do so, to select the favored persons from whom he would buy and the favored persons to whom he would sell, thus giving such persons an advantage over every other, and leading to a monopolization in the hands of such persons of all the products as to which the carrier chose to deal. Indeed the inevitable result of the possession of such a right by a carrier would be to enable it, if it chose to exercise the power, to concentrate in its own hands the products which were held for shipment along its line, and to make it, therefore, the sole purchaser thereof and the sole seller at the place where the products were to be marketed; in other words, to create an absolute monopoly. To illustrate: If a carrier may by becoming a dealer buy property for transportation to a market and eliminate the cost of transportation to such market, a faculty possessed by no other owner of the commodity, it must result that the carrier would be in a position where no other person could ship the commodity on equal terms with the carrier in its capacity of dealer. No other person owning the commodity being thus able to ship on equal terms, it would result that the owners of such commodity would not be able to ship, but would be compelled to sell to the carrier. And as by the departure from the tariff rates the person to whom the carrier might elect to sell would be able to buy at a price less than any other person could sell for, it would follow that such person so selected by the carrier would have a monopoly in the market to which the goods were transported. And that the result arising from an admission of the asserted power of the carrier as a dealer to disregard the published rates conduces immediately and not merely remotely to the production of the injurious results stated, is not only demonstrated by the very nature of things, but is established to be the case by the facts indisputably shown on this record. For here it is unquestioned that the Chesapeake and Ohio, as a result of its being a dealer, had become, long prior to the adoption of the interstate commerce law and continued to be thereafter, up to the passage of the West Virginia statute prohibiting a carrier from dealing in coal, virtually the sole purchaser and seller of all the coal produced along the line of its road. That this result was not merely accidental, but was in effect engendered by the power of the carrier to deal and transport a commodity, is illustrated by the case of *The Attorney General* v. *The Great Northern Railway Company*, (29 Law Journal [N. S. Equity] 794.) In that case Vice Chancellor Kindersley was called upon to determine whether dealing in coal by the railway company was

illegal, because incompatible with its duties as a public carrier and calculated to inflict an injury upon the public. In deciding that the act of Parliament granting the charter to operate the railway implied a prohibition against the company's engaging in any other business, the reason for the rule was thus expressed (p 798):

". . . These large companies, joint stock companies generally, for whatever purpose established, and more particularly railway companies, are armed with powers of raising and possessing large sums of money—large amounts of property—and if they were to apply that money, or that property, to purposes other than those for which they were constituted, they might very much injure the interests of the public in various ways."

Illustrating the danger to the public, as established by the case before him, the Vice Chancellor said (p 792):

"Here we find this company, having the traffic from the north of England, where the great coal fields are (at least some of the principal coal fields,) supplying the country with coal, or capable of supplying it; this company buys the coal, which gives to the company an interest in checking, as much as possible, those who will not deal with them; and it is quite clear that it is possible, by the mode in which this company may (I will not say has,) but by the mode in which this company may exercise such powers as either it has or assumes to have—this company may get into their hands the traffic that is, the dealing in all the coal in the large districts supplying coal to the country. They have to a considerable extent done so, and there is no reason why it should not go on progressing. I observe that in the eight (?) years from 1852 to 1857, inclusive, the amount of their coal business has increased from 73,000 tons to 794,000 tons; and there is no reason, as the affidavits show, why they should not—there is great danger that they may—get into their hands the entire business in the coal of all that district of country. If they can do that with regard to coal, what is to prevent their doing it with every species of agricultural produce all along the line? Why should they not become purchasers of corn, of all kinds of beasts, and of sheep, and every species of agricultural produce, and become great dealers in the supply of edibles to the markets of London; and why not every other species of commodity that is produced in every part of the country from which or to which their railway runs? I do not know where it is to stop, if the argument on the part of the company is to prevail. There is, therefore, great detriment to the interests of the public, for this reason, taking merely the article of coal."

It is apparent that the construction of the statute which is now claimed by the carriers would, if adopted, not only destroy its entire remedial efficacy, but would cause the provisions of the statute to accentuate and multiply the very wrongs which it was enacted to prevent.

Without a statutory requirement as to publication of rates and the imposition of a duty to adhere to the rates as published, individual action of the shippers as between themselves and in their dealings with the carrier would have full play, and thereby every shipper would have the opportunity to procure such concessions as might result from favoritism or

other causes. Interpreting the prohibitions of the statute as it is contended they should be, it would follow that every individual would be bound by the published tariff, and the carrier alone would be free to disregard it. Thus the statute, whilst subjecting the public to the prohibitions, would exempt the carrier and would thereby enormously increase the opportunities of the latter to do the wrongs which the statute was enacted to prevent.

And the considerations previously stated serve also to demonstrate that the prohibitions of the act to regulate commerce concerning "undue or unreasonable preference or advantage," "undue or unreasonable prejudice or disadvantage" and "unjust discrimination" are in conflict with the asserted right of a carrier to become a dealer in commodities which it transports, and as such dealer to sell at a price less than the cost and the published rates. Certain also is it, when the reasons previously stated are applied to those prohibitions of the statute the possession of the power by a carrier to deal in merchandise and to sell and transport at less than published rates, would not only destroy the remedy intended to be afforded by the provisions in question, but would cause the statute to fructify the growth of the wrongs which it was intended to extirpate. In a general sense the considerations which we have previously stated, moreover, dispose of all the contentions urged at bar to establish the right of the carrier to become a dealer under the circumstances stated. Even although it may give rise to some repetition, we more particularly notice the various contentions.

(*a*) It is said that when a carrier sells an article which it has purchased and transports that article for delivery, it is both a dealer and a carrier. When, therefore, the price received for the commodity is adequate to pay the published freight rate and something over, the command of the statute as to adherence to the published rates is complied with, because the price will be imputed to the freight rate, and the loss, if any, attributed to the company in its capacity as dealer and not as a carrier. This simply asserts the proposition which we have disposed of, that a carrier possesses the power, by the form in which he deals, to render the prohibitions of the act ineffective, since it implies the right of a carrier to shut off inquiry as to the real result of a particular transaction on the published rates, and thereby to obtain the power of disregarding the prohibitions of the statute.

(*b*) It is said that, as in the case in hand, it is shown that there was no intention on the part of the carrier in making the sale of the coal to violate the prohibitions of the statute, and, on the contrary, as the proof shows an arrangement made by the carrier for transporting the coal from Newport News to Connecticut, which, if it had been carried out, would have provided for the full published rate, therefore an honest contract made by the carrier should not be stricken down because of things over which the carrier had no control. The proposition involves both an unfounded

assumption of fact and an unwarranted implication of law. It is true the court below found that the proof did not justify the inference that the Chesapeake and Ohio had, in 1896, made the contract to sell the coal to the New Haven with the purpose of avoiding a compliance with the published rates. But in this conclusion of fact we cannot agree. Whilst it may be that the proof establishes that the contract for the sale of coal was not made as a mere device for avoiding the operation of the statute, we think the proof leaves no doubt that, in making the contract in question, the Chesapeake and Ohio was wholly indifferent to and did not concern itself with the prohibitions of the statute, of which, of course, it must be assumed, to have had full knowledge. As we have seen, the president of the Chesapeake and Ohio, by whom the corporation was represented in making the contract, expressly testified that from the beginning that corporation had pursued the policy of acquiring all the coal mined on its line and sold it, relying upon the net result of such sales for its freight compensation, and that the particular contract was made in continuation of that policy. We find it impossible to conclude, from the proof, that the Chesapeake and Ohio could have made a contract for so large an amount of coal, to be delivered over so long a period, without taking into view the existing prices and the cost necessarily to be occasioned by the delivery of the coal, if the full published freight rates were to be realized. Indeed, the proof leaves no doubt upon our minds that, in making the contract, the Chesapeake and Ohio sought to accomplish results which it deemed beneficial by means which it considered effectual, even although resort to such means was prohibited by the Interstate Commerce Act. In other words, we think it is established beyond doubt that, desiring to stimulate the production of coal along its line and thereby, as it conceived, to increase the carriage of that commodity and to benefit the railroad and those living along its line by the reflex prosperity which it was deemed would arise from giving a stimulus to an industry tributary to the railroad, the Chesapeake and Ohio bought and sold the coal without reference to whether the net result to it would realize its published rates. And it would seem that this means of stimulating the industry in question was resorted to instead of attempting to bring about the same result by a lowering of the published rates, because to have so done would have engendered disparity between coal rates and the tariff on all the other articles contained in the same classification, and would besides have caused other and competing roads to make a similar reduction on the published rates, and thereby would have frustrated the very advantage to itself and those along its lines which the Chesapeake and Ohio deemed it was bringing about by the method pursued. That is to say, we think it is shown that the mode of dealing adopted was simply the result of a disregard by the Chesapeake and Ohio of the economic conceptions upon which the interstate commerce law rests, and a substitution in

their stead of the conceptions of the Chesapeake and Ohio as to what was best for itself and for the public. Further, as the prohibition of the Interstate Commerce Act is ever operative, even if the facts established that at the particular time the contract was made, considering the then cost of coal and other proper items, the net published tariff of rates would have been realized by the Chesapeake and Ohio from the contract, which is not the case, it is apparent that the deliveries under the contract came under the prohibition of the statute whenever for any cause, such as the enhanced cost of the coal at the mines, an increase in the cost of the ocean carriage, etc., the gross sum realized was not sufficient to net the Chesapeake and Ohio its published tariff of rates. This must be the case in order to give vitality to the prohibitions of the Interstate Commerce Act against the acceptance at any time by a carrier of less than its published rates. We say this because we think it obvious that such prohibitions would be rendered wholly ineffective by deciding that a carrier may avoid those prohibitions by making a contract for the sale of a commodity stipulating for the payment of a fixed price in the future, and thereby acquiring the power during the life of the contract to continue to execute it, although a violation of the act to regulate commerce might arise from doing so. Besides, all the contentions just noticed proceed upon the mistaken legal conception that the application of the statutory prohibitions depend not upon whether the effect of the acts done is to violate those prohibitions, but upon whether the carrier intended to violate the statute.

(*c*) It is urged that if the requirement of the act to regulate commerce as to the maintenance of published rates and the prohibitions of that act against undue preferences and discriminations be applied to a carrier when engaged in buying and selling a commodity which it transports, the substantial effect will be to prohibit the carrier from becoming a dealer when no such prohibition is expressed in the act to regulate commerce, and hence a prohibition will be implied which should only result from express action by Congress. Granting the premise, the deduction is unfounded. Because no express prohibition against a carrier who engages in interstate commerce becoming a dealer in commodities moving in such commerce is found in the act, it does not follow that the provisions which are expressed in that act should not be applied and be given their lawful effect. Even, therefore, if the result of applying the prohibitions as we have interpreted them will be practically to render it difficult, if not impossible, for a carrier to deal in commodities, this affords no ground for relieving us of the plain duty of enforcing the provisions of the statute as they exist. This conclusion follows, since the power of Congress to subject every carrier engaging in interstate commerce to the regulations which it has adopted is undoubted.

But it is in effect said, conceding this to be true as an original question, the prohibitions of the act ought not now to be interpreted as applying to a carrier who is a dealer in commodities, because of an adminstrative construction long since given to the act by the Interstate Commerce Commission, the body primarily charged with its enforcement, and which has become a rule of property affecting vast interests which should not be judicially departed from, especially as such construction, it is asserted, has been impliedly sanctioned by C gress by frequently amending the act without changing it in this particular.

Passing, for the present, the legal conclusion, let us first ascertain whether the premise itself is well founded. The two rulings of the Interstate Commerce Commission upon which the premise is based are *Haddock* v. *Delaware, L. & W. R. Co.*, (4 I. C. C. Rep. 296, 3 Inters. Com. Rep. 302,) and *Coxe Bros. & Co.* v. *Lehigh Valley R. R. Co.*, (4 I C. C. Rep. 535, 3 Inters. Com. Rep. 460,) decided respectively in 1890 and 1891.

Without going into detail we content ourselves with saying that in both of the cases complaints were made to the Interstate Commerce Commission concerning the defendant railroads, and it was charged that whilst acting as common carriers they were dealing in coal, and as a result violating the prohibitions of the Interstate Commerce Act as to rates and undue preferences and discriminations. It was shown in both cases that the carriers prior to the adoption of the Interstate Commerce Act were authorized by their charters or legislative authority to carry on both the business of mining and selling the coal so mined and transporting the same to market. Indeed it was found in both cases that the functions of producing and transporting as authorized were so interblended that it was impossible to separate one from the other. Whilst it is true that in both of the cases it was also shown that the carriers bought, sold and transported some coal which was not produced in the mines which they owned, this fact was evidently treated in view of the other circumstances of the case as of minor importance, since the commingled powers of producing, selling and transporting were alone made the basis of the conclusion reached by the Commission as to the character of relief which could be afforded. Solely in view of the lawful power of the carriers to mine, sell and transport existing before the passage of the act to regulate commerce the Commission decided that its authority, under that statute and under the circumstances of the case, was confined to compelling the exaction of rates which were just and reasonable. The fact that the rulings in the two cases just referred to were solely placed upon the peculiar powers of the defendant corporations possessed by them prior to the passage of the Interstate Commerce Act was pointed out by the Commission in *Grain Rates of Chicago Great Western Ry. Co.*, (7 I. C. C. Rep. 33.) In that case, in deciding that the defendant carrier was without power to purchase grain for the purpose of

securing the right to transport it, and thus evade the the law which would have applied to its transportation had it been owned by any other party, the Commission, in distinguishing the case before it from the Haddock and Coxe cases, said (p. 38):

"Those cases are in no respect similar to this. In both the common carrier was also the owner of extensive coal fields, and indeed it had become a common carrier largely for the purpose of transporting the product of those mines to market. This state of things existed before the passage of the act, and had no reference to the act. Unless the carrier was permitted to transport its coal, the result would be in effect the confiscation of its property, and to order it to charge itself with a particular rate would merely result in a matter of bookkeeping. Under these circumstances it was held that the only remedy was to enquire whether the rate charged the complainant was a reasonable one."

Now, without at all intimating that as an original question we would concur in the view expressed in the case last cited that to have applied the act to regulate commerce, under proper rules and regulations for the segregation of the business of producing, selling and transporting as presented in the Haddock and Coxe cases would have been confiscatory, and without reviewing the rulings made by the Interstate Commerce Commission in those cases and adhered to by that body during the many years which have followed those decisions, we concede that the interpretation given by the Commission in those cases to the act to regulate commerce is now binding, and as restricted to the precise conditions which were passed on in the cases referred to, must be applied to all strictly identical cases in the future, at least until Congress has legislated on the subject. We make this concession, because we think we are constrained to so do, in consequence of the familiar rule that a construction made by the body charged with the enforcement of a statute, which construction has long obtained in practical execution, and has been impliedly sanctioned by the re-enactment of the statute without alteration in the particulars construed, when not plainly erroneous, must be treated as read into the statute. Especially do we think this rule applicable to the case in hand, because of the nature and extent of the authority conferred on the Commission from the beginning concerning the prohibitions of the act as to rebates, favoritism and discrimination of all kinds, and particularly in view of the repeated declarations of the court that an exertion of power by the Commission concerning such matters was entitled to great weight and was not lightly to be interfered with. The concessions thus made, however, are wholly irrelevant to the case before us. This follows, since the Chesapeake and Ohio was, neither by its charter nor by legislative grant existing at the time of the adoption of the act to regulate commerce, possessed of the commingled attributes of carrier and producer, which was the controlling consideration in the decisions made in the Haddock and Coxe cases.

Ohio bought it and the cost of transportation from Newport News to Connecticut would aggregate $2.47 per ton, thus leaving to the Chesapeake and Ohio only about twenty-eight cents a ton for carrying the coal from the Kanawha district to Newport News, whilst the published tariff for like carriage from the same district was $1.45 per ton.

Referring to the developments before the Commission and annexing as part thereof the testimony taken on such hearing and the documents connected therewith, the petition further alleged that the Chesapeake and Ohio asserted that, although the total price which it received for the coal covered by the verbal agreement was less than the total outlay in delivering the coal, including its published rates, such fact did not amount to a departure from the published rates, and was not a discrimination for two reasons: First. Because if such difference existed, it was a loss suffered by the Chesapeake and Ohio, not from taking less than its published rates, but because it had received less as purchaser than the coal had cost. Second. That even if it had not the lawful right thus to impute the payment of the price of the coal, the Chesapeake and Ohio had, in fact, received much more for the coal than the price in money agreed on, because, at the time the verbal agreement to sell was made the New Haven had a claim exceeding one hundred thousand dollars against the Chesapeake and Ohio, arising from a previous written contract to deliver coal, which was to be extinguished by the completion of the delivery of the coal and this caused that price largely to exceed the cost of the coal to the Chesapeake and Ohio, including its published rates. Averring that the prior contract was in itself void because it also embodied an agreement to take less than the published rates and was discriminating, it was charged that the New Haven had entered into both agreements with the Chesapeake and Ohio, knowing that they were in violation of the interstate commerce law. The prayer was that the Chesapeake and Ohio and the New Haven be made parties; that both roads be enjoined, the one from further executing the verbal agreement to deliver coal and the other from seeking to enforce it; that the Chesapeake and Ohio be enjoined from "accepting or receiving any rebate, concession or discrimination in respect of the transportation of any property in interstate or foreign commerce carried by it," and be, moreover, enjoined from "doing anything whatever, whereby coal or any other property shall, by any device whatever, be transported . . . at a less rate than named in the tariffs published and filed by such carrier, as is required by the act to regulate commerce and acts amendatory thereof or supplementary thereto, or whereby any other advantage may be given or discrimination practiced." And that the New Haven road "be enjoined and restrained from accepting or receiving any rebate, concession or discrimination in respect of the transportation of any property in interstate or foreign commerce carried by it."

A preliminary restraining order was issued conforming to the prayer of the petition. The Chesapeake and Ohio by its answer admitted that it had made, in the spring of 1903, a verbal agreement with the New Haven road for about sixty thousand tons of Kanawha coal for the price alleged in the petition, to be transported by it to Newport News, and thence delivered by ocean transportation to the New Haven in Connecticut. It was admitted that the purchase price agreed to be paid was less than the market price of the coal plus the published rates, and the cost of transportation and delivery from Newport News to Connecticut, but it was averred that this was only apparently the case, because the contract to sell included the discharge of a debt of about one hundred thousand dollars, arising from the previous written contract to which the petition referred. The validity of both the previous written contract and the later verbal agreement was averred. The right of the Chesapeake and Ohio to buy and sell coal, and to impute any loss on the sale of the coal to itself as dealer instead of to itself as a carrier, was averred. Both the original contract and the one of 1903 were averred to have been made in good faith, not with any intention to avoid the published rates, and it was charged that at about the time the original contract was made arrangements had been made by the railroad for a rate of transportation from Newport News to Connecticut which would have caused the contract price to be adequate to pay the market price of the coal and all other charges, including the published rates, but that, subsequently thereto, the persons with whom this contract for transportation was made had violated their agreement, and that by strikes the price of coal had advanced, and thereby the loss of one hundred thousand dollars to the Chesapeake and Ohio was occasioned.

The New Haven road in its answer asserted its good faith in making both the original contract and the verbal agreement. It alleged that by the original contract it was a mere purchaser of coal from the Chesapeake and Ohio, and not a shipper over that road; that the coal bought was intended for its own use in the operation of its railroad; that it had no knowledge of the price which the Chesaspeake and Ohio would be obliged to pay for the coal or the sum which it would cost that road to deliver it, and therefore had no knowledge that the total cost would not equal the market price of the coal, the cost of delivery and the published rate of the Chesapeake and Ohio. It averred the validity of the agreement, the legality of the debt of one hundred thousand dollars which resulted from it, and charged that, taking that debt into consideration, the sum which it paid the Chesapeake and Ohio for the coal under the 1903 verbal agreement largely exceeded the market price and the cost of delivery, including the published rates of the Chesapeake and Ohio. It denied that there was any departure from the public rates or any discrimination, asserted that at the time the original contract was made the price was sufficient to have enabled

the Chesapeake and Ohio to perform the contract without losing anything either as a seller or as a carrier, and that if in execution of the contract a condition arose where a loss was suffered by the Chesapeake and Ohio in either capacity, it was caused by subsequent events which could not affect the validity of the contract when made, and especially denied that in any way, directly or indirectly, had it knowingly lent itself to any discrimination, or any taking by the Chesapeake and Ohio of less than its published rates.

The case was heard on the testimony taken in the proceeding before the Commission and the documents forming a part of the same, and upon further documents and testimony stipulated by counsel.

For reasons to which we shall hereafter have occasion to advert, the court held that, considering both the original contract and the verbal agreement of 1903, there was no violation of the provisions of the second and sixth sections of the act to regulate commerce, forbidding the taking of less than the published rates. It, however, held that the contracts amounted to an undue discrimination and a violation of the third section of the act. The court, hence, permanently enjoined the Chesapeake and Ohio from discharging any obligation arising from the original contract of 1896, and from further executing or attempting to execute, in any manner whatever, directly or indirectly, the verbal agreement of 1903, and it permanently enjoined the New Haven from asserting or attempting to enforce any claim arising from the contract of 1896, or in any manner, directly or indirectly, attempting to enforce the verbal agreement of 1903. Thereafter the court denied a request made by the Commission, that the injunction be expanded so as in general terms to command the Chesapeake and Ohio perpetually to observe in the future its published rates.

The ~~Chesapeake and Ohio and the~~ New Haven appealed. The Commission also prosecuted a cross appeal because of the refusal of the court to grant its prayer to make the injunction against the Chesapeake and Ohio general in its nature, and that Company in an elaborate and

It is apparent from the case as thus stated that, in order to decide the issues which arise, we may not confine our attention to the verbal agreement of 1903, the execution of which it was the immediate object of the proceeding to enjoin, but must consider the prior contract of 1896, since primarily the rights, if any, which arose under the verbal agreement, are inextricably involved in and dependent upon the contract of 1896. In other words, the controversy as considered by the Commission on the inquiry by it conducted and as decided below, and as here presented, involves an analysis of all the dealings under both contracts and the legal rights, if any, which arose from them. We must, therefore, consider the subject in this aspect, and to do so we state at once the facts which are admitted or which are indisputably established, reserving such questions of

fact as are in dispute for separate consideration when we approach the legal propositions which arise from the undisputed facts.

The Chesapeake and Ohio, chartered by the State of Virginia, operates a road which reaches both the New River and the Kanawha coal fields of West Virginia, and extends to Newport News. The New Haven, chartered by the State of Connecticut, operates a road principally situated in New England. On December 3, 1896, these two roads entered into a written contract, the one to sell and the other to buy between July 1, 1897, and July 1, 1902, not to exceed two million gross tons of bituminous coal to be taken from the line of the Chesapeake and Ohio road; deliveries to be made not exceeding four hundred thousand tons per annum. The price agreed upon was $2.75 per gross ton, New Haven basis, settlement to be made monthly. The coal was to be delivered by the seller on the line of the New Haven. The contract is reproduced in the margin.*

The Chesapeake and Ohio, not in its own name but through others who really although not ostensibly acted for it, made a contract with operators in the New River district of West Virginia, for the delivery to it of the coal to fulfill the contract which had been made with the New Haven. In consequence of failure of some of the operators to perform their part of the contract, changes were made at various times, which it is unnecessary to note. Deliveries of the coal were made to the New Haven as required up to the winter of 1900–1901, when, because of strikes and other difficulties, delivery ceased and the New Haven bought coal in the open market and presented to the Chesapeake and Ohio a bill for the increased price which it had paid, and the Chesapeake and Ohio paid one hundred and sixty thousand dollars to cover such loss. Subsequently in 1902 further strikes supervened and deliveries again ceased, at a time when about sixty thousand tons remained yet to be delivered. The New Haven again presented a bill for damages amounting to one hundred and three thousand dollars. Thereupon the verbal agreement of 1903 was made, by which it

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* Contract made between the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company and the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company.

Said Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company, for the consideration hereinafter mentioned, hereby agrees to furnish to said railroad company not to exceed two million gross tons of bituminous coal from its line in such quantities monthly as wanted from July 1, 1897, to July 1, 1902, without charge for demurrage. Deliveries to be made not exceeding four hundred thousand tons per annum.

And said Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company further agrees that all said bituminous coal shall be of the best quality, first-class in every respect, and satisfactory to said railroad company, and said railway company has the right to terminate this contract at any time if said bituminous coal be of poor quality or if its delivery be unnecessarily delayed.

And said Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company further agrees to deliver all

was provided that the shortage of sixty thousand tons upon the original contract might be discharged by delivery on the part of the Chesapeake and Ohio of that amount of coal from the Kanawha district at the contract price of $2.75, and when this delivery was consummated it was agreed that the Chesapeake and Ohio would be absolutely relieved from the payment of the damage claim just referred to.

At the time this verbal agreement was made the contract price was, leaving out of view the claim for damages, inadequate to pay the market price, as admitted by the pleadings, of the coal plus the published rates of the Chesapeake and Ohio to Newport News, and the charges thence to the point of delivery. To put itself in a position to carry out the agreement an individual who represented the Chesapeake and Ohio made contracts in his own name with operators in the Kanawha district to furnish the desired coal. Without stopping to state the particular methods of accounting by which the result was accomplished, it is indisputable that the Chesapeake and Ohio bore the loss arising from the difference between the contract price, the price of the coal at the mines, the published rate to Newport News, and the cost of transporting thence to the point of delivery.

Undoubtedly long prior to the making of the first contract the Chesapeake and Ohio, besides its business as a carrier, bought and sold coal. This business was carried on by the company from about 1874 up to the time of the making of the contract of 1896, as testified by the president who made that contract, as follows:

"The coal was handled by a separate and distinct department of the railway company, the mine operators delivering for an agreed price at the mines to the coal agent of the railway company all coal mined by them, the net result realized from the selling price of the coal representing the freight earned by the railway company."

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said bituminous coal to said railroad company in its bins at such ports upon its lines as required by the monthly requisitions of its purchasing agent.

In consideration of the faithful performance by the said Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company of all its agreements herein contained, said railroad company agrees to pay for said bituminous coal at the rate of two and seventy-five one-hundredths dollars per gross ton, New Haven basis, settlement to be made *monthly*.

Said railway company has the right to cancel any and all portions of said quantity of bituminous coal remaining undelivered on July 1, 1902.

Witness the names of the parties hereto this the 3d day of December, 1896.

CHESAPEAKE AND OHIO RAILWAY COMPANY,
By M. E. INGALLS, President.
THE NEW YORK, NEW HAVEN AND HARTFORD RAILROAD COMPANY,
By C. E. MELLEN, Second Vice President.

For value received, I hereby guarantee that the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company shall not fail to deliver coal on account of strikes.

J. PIERPONT MORGAN.

And the same official testified that he made the contract of 1896 as a continuation of this system.

In 1895, however, the State of West Virginia passed "An act to prevent railroad companies from buying or selling coal or coke and to prevent discrimination." The first section of this act made it unlawful for any railroad corporation to engage directly or indirectly in the business of buying and selling coal or coke. In consequence of this act, prior to the making of the contract of 1896, the coal department of the railroad was abolished. And it was the existence of the West Virginia statute which caused the Chesapeake and Ohio, when it contracted with operators in West Virginia to procure as to both contracts the coal for delivery to the New Haven to do so not in its own name but through another.

Before applying to these undisputed facts the legal question arising for decision, we must determine a question of fact as to which there is some dispute; that is, was the price at which the Chesapeake and Ohio contracted in 1896 to sell the coal to the New Haven sufficient to pay the cost of the coal at the mines, as well as the expense of delivery, including the published freight rate? Without stopping to go into the evidence we content ourselves with saying that we think the court below correctly held that the price was not adequate to accomplish these purposes, and that from the inception of delivery under the contract and during the whole period thereof, except for a brief time, caused by a lowering of the freight rates, the contract price was inadequate to net the railroad its proper legal tariff.

We are brought then to determine whether the contract made in 1896 for the two million tons of coal was void because in conflict with the act to regulate commerce and its amendments. In approaching the consideration of the act to regulate commerce, we for the moment put out of view the provisions of the West Virginia statute and its influence upon the validity of the contract made in West Virginia for the purpose of acquiring the coal which the Chesapeake and Ohio had obligated itself to deliver. We shall also assume for the purpose of the inquiry that the Chesapeake and Ohio, although not expressly authorized, was not prohibited by its Virginia charter from buying and selling and transporting the coal in which it dealt. The case, therefore, will be considered solely in the light of the operation and effect of the provisions of the act to regulate commerce, and we shall not direct our attention to expressly determining whether the assertion by a carrier of a right to deal in the products which it transports would not be so repugnant to the general duty resting on the carrier as to cause the exertion of the power to deal in the products which it transports to be unlawful, irrespective of statutory restrictions.

The question, therefore, to be decided is this: Has a carrier engaged in interstate commerce the power to contract to sell and tranport in comple-

Concluding, therefore, that both the contracts made by the Chesapeake and Ohio with the New Haven were contrary to public policy and void because in conflict with the prohibitions of the act to regulate commerce, it obviously follows that such contracts were not susceptible of being enforced by the New Haven, and afforded no legal basis for a claim of the New Haven against the Chesapeake and Ohio, and therefore the court below was correct in so deciding.

This leaves only for consideration the question raised by the cross-appeal of the Interstate Commerce Commission. That proposition is thus stated in the first of the assignments of error filed on behalf of the Commission:

"That the Circuit Court of the United States for the Western District of Virginia, after finding that the claim of the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company against the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company for $103,910.69, asserted as damages arising from a partial non-performance by said railway company of a contract of December 3, 1896, set out in the record, is, as to the whole of said claim and interest thereon, an illegal and unenforceable claim, and after finding that the verbal agreement between said companies, made in April, 1903, and set out in said record, whereby said railway company undertook to furnish to said railroad company 59,966 tons of coal, to be transported from West Virginia to Newport News, Virginia, over the lines of said railway company, and thence transported by vessels to certain New England ports, said coal to be delivered at said ports at the price of $2.75 per ton, New Haven basis, to be an invalid and illegal agreement; that said court merely enjoined and restrained the said Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company, its officers, agents, and employees from, in any manner, direct or indirect, executing or performing, or attempting to execute or perform, either said contract of December 3, 1896, or said agreement of April, 1903, and from in any manner discharging or satisfying any obligation or seeming obligation arising from said agreements or either of them, or arising from any arrangement or agreement made in lieu of said agreements, or either of them; whereas said court should have further enjoined and restrained the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company from giving to said railroad company, or to any other person, firm, or company, any undue or unreasonable advantage or preference, and should further have restrained and enjoined the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company from transporting coal from one State to or through any other State for the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company, or for any firm, person, or company, at a less rate than the duly established freight rate of the said railway company in force at the time, and from further failing to observe its published tariffs, or from giving to the said New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company, or to any person, firm, or company, in any manner whatsoever, any undue or unreasonable preference or advantage, and said decree, entered by the court on the 19th day of February, 1904, in addition to the provisions thereof, should have enjoined and restrained the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company and its officers and agents from seeking or accepting, in any manner, any direct or indirect rebate of the duly established freight rates of the Chesapeake and

Ohio Railway Company on any interstate commerce, and from seeking or accepting in any manner from said railway company any undue or unreasonable preference or advantage."

The contention, therefore, is that whenever a carrier has been adjudged to have violated the act to regulate commerce in any particular it is the duty of the court, not only to enjoin the carrier from further like violations of the act, but to command it in general terms not to violate the act in the future in any particular. In other words, the proposition is that by the effect of a judgment against a carrier concerning a specific violation of the act, the carrier ceases to be under the protection of the law of the land and must thereafter conduct all its business under the jeopardy of punishment for contempt for violating a general injunction. To state the proposition is, we think, to answer it. (*Swift & Company* v. *United States*, 196 U. S. 375.) The contention that the cited case is inapposite because it did not concern the act to regulate commerce, but involved a violation of the anti-trust act, we think is also answered by the mere statement of the proposition. The requirement of the act to regulate commerce that a court shall enforce an observance of the statute against a carrier who has been adjudged to have violated its provisions, in no way gives countenance to the assumption that Congress intended that a court should issue an injunction of such a general character as would be violative of the most elementary principles of justice. The injunction which was granted in the case of *In re Debs*, (154 U. S. 564,) was not open to such an objection, as its terms were no broader than the conspiracy which it was the purpose of the proceeding to restrain. To accede to the doctrine relied upon would compel us, under the guise of protecting freedom of commerce, to announce a rule which would be destructive of the fundamental liberties of the citizen.

As the court below did not decide that the second and sixth sections of the act, relating to the maintenance of rates, had been violated, the injunction, by it issued, was not made as directly responsive to the commands of the statute on that subject as we think it should have been. We, therefore, conclude that the injunction below should be modified and enlarged by perpetually enjoining the Chesapeake and Ohio from taking less than the rates fixed in its published tariff of freight rates, by means of dealing in the purchase and sale of coal. And, as thus modified, the decree below is

Affirmed.

True copy.

Test:

Clerk Supreme Court, U. S.